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PHOTOGRAPHIC FILM CARTRIDGE AND CAMERA INCLUDING SUCHFIELD OF INVENTION

5 The present invention relates to a photographic film cartridge and camera including the cartridge and in particular although not solely of a kind to provide a semi disposable use.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

10 Nowadays, commonly used photographic films include 135 films, 120 films, 110 films and APS films, among which 135 films are the most popular films. 120 films are mainly used for commercial purposes because of their high quality and larger sizes. The size of 110 films is relatively small and its quality is relatively low, so it is not very popular. APS is a new technology and has a lot of advanced features, however, its film development system is not compatible with 135's , so the
15 growth of APS has been restricted.

 The development of disposable cameras has been comparatively fast. There are many advantages in that they are easy to operate, low in cost, easy to carry and the quality is acceptable. Disposable cameras are particularly suitable for beginners. Since the procedures of inserting and removing the film involves some
20 degree of knowledge and skill, the current disposable camera avoids the possibility of errors as far as loading of films is concerned because the film is pre-loaded.

 There are two main disadvantages of disposable cameras. The cost of buying the camera includes both the camera set and the film set, but the camera set is disposed of after a single use although some of them may be recycled. This creates

waste. Secondly, being a disposable item in nature, there is tight control on the production cost which therefore restricts the inclusion of more advanced features such auto flash, auto wind and higher quality lens.

People have been trying to develop a product which can produce good quality photos like an ordinary 135 film camera but at the price of and with simplicity of operations of a disposable camera.

A combination camera body with features such as the lens, shutter, dark room and film winder which was capable of receiving a replaceable film cartridge has been available to the public before. The cartridge for use with the camera body came in the form of two film spooling regions, a first where the film was spooled in a used state and another spooling region to which the film was advanced after having been exposed. The two spooling regions were interconnected by a bridging portion wherein the bridging portion held the film in a position relative to the lens and shutter to allow exposure of each frame of the film. The spooling regions were effectively light sealed regions such that any film within the spooling regions could not be exposed to light. The film extending across the bridging region was able to be exposed to light and, when in use, such light was controlled by the lens and shutter arrangement of the camera body. The cartridge, outside of the camera body, did not provide any dark room effect to the film between the two spooling regions. Hence the use of cameras of this type required the film to be inserted into the camera body and remain within the body during the stages where the film was advanced from one spooling region to another, if no undesirable exposure of the film was to occur as a result of the cartridge being removed from the camera body and thereby allowing any films extending across the bridging region to be exposed. Such earlier designs hence did not lend themselves to allowing for film cartridges to be removed midway during use of the film without risking detrimental exposure of the film extending between the two spooling regions. Earlier type of

design also required separate apparatus for processing the film in terms of handling the film from the cartridge after it had been used. Since the predominant format of film now is the 35mm format and indeed the earlier film types in the cartridges such as the 110 format are now very uncommon, most development labs are set up for developing the 35mm format or the APS format. Any introduction of a new format may mean that further handling equipment will need to be purchased by development labs to which there will be resistance. It would hence be desirable for a film cartridge to exist which includes a standard 35mm film incorporated with a film canister which will make the subsequent handling of the film for development by development labs convenient.

It is accordingly an object of the invention to provide a photographic film cartridge which may be used with a camera body which provides greater flexibility and convenience of use or which will at least provide the public with a useful choice.

It is a further object to provide a camera and film cartridge combination set which provides greater flexibility and convenience of use or which will at least provide the public with a useful choice.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a film cartridge which includes a preloaded film engaged for scrolling to and/or from a standard 35mm or APS film canister.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Accordingly, a first aspect of the present invention broadly comprises a film cartridge containing a film for engagement with a camera body to thereby in combination allow the capturing of an image onto the film in reliance on appropriately provided and positioned light control and projection means of said camera body to selectively allow light to be projected onto a portion of the film in

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said cartridge to thereby be exposed by said light. The film cartridge comprises: an unexposed film spool region, a second spool region, and a bridging portion between the unexposed film spool region and the second spool region via which the film can be advanced to at least in part be moved from the unexposed film spool region to the second region. The bridging region provides a dark room for the film between the unexposed film spool region and the second spool region. The bridging region includes an opening positioned such that when the film cartridge is engaged with the camera body, film is presented for exposure by light admitted through the light control means of the camera body and the opening of the film cartridge.

A door is provided to the film cartridge to selectively move between a first and second position. In the first position, the cartridge opening is closed to prevent light from entering the dark room. In the second condition, the opening is open to allow exposure of the film.

A second aspect of the present invention broadly comprises a camera having a camera body and a film cartridge containing a film, in engagement with the camera body to thereby in combination allow the capture of an image onto the film in reliance on appropriately provided and positioned light control and projection means of the camera body to selectively allow light to be projected onto a portion of the film in the cartridge to thereby be exposed to light.

The film cartridge comprises: an unexposed film spool region, a second spool region and a bridging portion between the unexposed film spool region and the second spool region via which the film can be advanced to at least in part be moved from the unexposed film spool region to the second region.

The bridging region provides a dark room for the film between the unexposed film spool region and the second spool region. The bridging region includes an opening positioned such that when the film cartridge is engaged with the

camera body, film is presented for exposure to light admitted through the light control means of the camera body and the opening of the film cartridge.

A door is provided to the film cartridge to selectively move between a first and second position. In the first position, the opening is closed to prevent light from entering the dark room and in the second condition, the opening is open to allow exposure of the film. The door is preferably maintained in the first position until the cartridge is fully engaged in the camera body.

Preferably, when in a fully engaged condition, the camera body and the cartridge cooperate to define a region which is light sealed except when the light control means is activated to expose part of the film in the bridging portion.

The door is preferably actuated to move between the first and second positions by an actuation means of the camera body. The actuation means preferably engages a safety latch for the door to trigger the movement of the door from the first position to the second position.

A spring is preferably used to move the door from the first position to the second position. The door is preferably pivotably engaged to said bridging region or is translatably engaged to said bridging region.

The actuation means preferably engages a safety latch for the door to trigger the movement of the door from the second position to the first position. A spring is preferably used to move the door from the second position to the first position. The actuation means preferably becomes operable to move the door upon the action of insertion and removal of the cartridge with the camera body.

The actuation means is preferably operable by the action of the user once the cartridge is fully engaged with the camera body. The actuation means is preferably operable upon depression of the camera body shutter control button.

Film provided inside the cartridge is engaged to a film canister, preferably of a standard 35mm format. The film canister is preferably located at the

unexposed film spool region of the cartridge such that during advancement of the film for exposure, the film is at least in part transferred from the canister to the second spool region. The film canister may preferably be located at the second spool region of the cartridge such that during advancement of the film for exposure, the film is transferred from the second spool region to the canister. The film cartridge is preferably provided for use in a condition wherein the unexposed film is in a substantial part spooled in the unexposed spool region and wherein the film extends to a distal end thereof engaged to the film canister located in the second spool region.

A further aspect of the present invention comprises a camera body for use in combination with a film cartridge as hereinbefore described. A further aspect comprises a camera body and at least one film cartridge as hereinbefore described provided in a marketable pack suitable for retail.

Yet another aspect of the present invention broadly consists in a camera or a film cartridge for use to define a camera having a control unit with which the cartridge can, in engagement with the control unit in combination, allow capture of an image onto the film in reliance on appropriately provided and positioned shutter and projection means of the cartridge, to selectively allow light to be projected onto a portion of the film in the cartridge to thereby be exposed by the light, wherein the control unit provides at least one of a trigger for activating the movement of the shutter, a flash, a film winder, a view finder, a film counter.

The film cartridge comprises: an unexposed film spool region, a second spool region and a bridging portion between the unexposed film spool region and the second spool region via which film can be advanced to at least in part be moved from the unexposed film spool region to the second region.

The bridging region provides a dark room for the film between the unexposed film spool region and the second spool region. The bridging region includes a light aperture and shutter and projection means (e.g. a lens) positioned

such that when the film cartridge is engaged with the control unit, film is presented for exposure by light selectively admitted through the aperture.

A further aspect of the present invention comprises a film cartridge containing a film of an elongate kind having a first distal end and a second distal end engaged to a spooling spindle within a film canister, the cartridge being engageable with a camera body to thereby in combination allow the capturing of images onto the film in reliance on appropriately provided and positioned light control and projection means of the camera body, which selectively allow light to be projected onto a portion of the film in said cartridge. The film cartridge comprises: an unexposed film spool region, a second spool region within which the film canister is retained and a bridging portion between the unexposed film spool region and the second spool region via which the film can be advanced to at least in part be moved from the unexposed film spool region to the second region.

The bridging region provides a dark room for the film extending between the unexposed film spool region and the second spool region, when the film cartridge is engaged to the camera body. The bridging region includes an opening positioned such that when the film cartridge is engaged with the camera body, that portion of the film in the dark room is presented for exposure to light admitted through the light control means of the camera body and the opening of the film cartridge.

The film cartridge prevents light from entering the unexposed spool. The film cartridge is preferably a housing within which the film is located and sealed from exposure to light save for that portion of the film in the dark room.

The bridging region is preferably an enclosure which includes the opening. The enclosure is preferably also open to the second spool region. The unexposed spool region is preferably enclosed except for a narrow slot through which the film can pass, such that the film in the unexposed film spool region is

substantially sealed against light. The second spool region preferably includes means for driving the spooling spindle externally of the film cartridge.

The cartridge may be of one piece. But in an alternate embodiment, it is separable into one part with one of the spool regions and another part with the rest of the cartridge. The parts are detachably latchable together. This facilitates removal of film from the one part and also permits easy installation of a new film supply into the one part, which may then be transferred back to the other spool region. From the other spool region, the film can be returned to the first spool region, this time exposing the film to the images in succession.

The housing of the camera body is preferably a two part housing having a front and rear part separably engaged to each other. The rear part is preferably a lid separably engaged to the front part.

The housing detents the cartridge in the camera body. As the camera body has a receptacle with an opening into it, the photographic film cartridge is installed in the receptacle. It is guided into position by a cooperating protrusion into groove connectors.

Once the cartridge is fully installed, detent tabs on the camera body snap into recesses in the rear of the cartridge and retain the cartridge. To release the cartridge a release device moves the tabs off the cartridge. It may comprise a lever or bar which is shifted to raise the tabs. A switch operates the lever or bar to release the cartridge.

This invention may also be said broadly to consist of the parts, elements and features referred to or indicated in this specification, individually or collectively, and any or all combinations of any two or more of said parts, elements or features, and where specific integers are mentioned herein which have known equivalents in the art to which this invention relates, such known equivalents are deemed to be incorporated herein as if individually set forth.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 shows a camera body and cartridge film prior to it being engaged with the body.

5 Figure 2 is a perspective view of the film cartridge inserted in the camera body.

Figure 3 is the film cartridge with the backing plate of the cartridge and the film removed.

Figure 4 is the same drawing as Figure 3 but with film added.

10 Figure 5 is a perspective view of the front of the film cartridge showing the window and various operating features.

Figure 6 shows the fully assembled film cartridge.

Figure 6(a) is an exploded perspective view of an embodiment of the film cartridge.

15 Figure 7 shows the partial insertion of the film cartridge into the camera body and shows the operation of the film cartridge door.

Figure 8 shows the camera body from underneath showing the features that operate the film cartridge door. Figures 8(a), 8(b) and 8(c) respectively illustrate three stages in the operation of the film cartridge door. Figures 8(d), 8(e) and 8(f) are respectively perspective side and front views of a locking cover for the
20 cartridge door. Figure 8(g) shows the cartridge and the door separated from each other.

Figure 9(a) and 9(b) show the bottom and top of the camera and film cartridge respectively and illustrate some of the film advancement and control features.

25 Figure 10(a) shows a bottom view of a camera body and film cartridge illustrating how they are indexed into their relative positions.

Figure 10(b) shows a camera body and film cartridge assembled together viewed from the bottom showing the means with which the photographs remaining on the film are counted.

5 Figure 11(a) to 11(c) show the insertion of the film cartridge into the camera and in doing so the opening of the film cartridge shutter. Figure 11(d) shows the cartridge elements exploded apart. Figure 11(e) is a top view of an assembled camera body and cartridge.

10 Figure 12(a) and Figure 12(b) show an alternative embodiment for the opening of the film cartridge door as the film cartridge is inserted into the camera body.

Figure 13(a) and Figure 13(b) illustrate a method where the camera shutter is actuated to thus exposing the film.

15 Figure 14(a) and Figure 14(b) show an embodiment where the door for opening the dark room is part of the film cartridge but actuated by an actuator means of the camera body.

Figure 15 shows an embodiment where the film cartridge is slid up and into the camera body.

Figure 16 shows an alternative film cartridge insertion embodiment whereby the film is inserted from the back of the camera body.

20 Figure 17 shows a further alternative embodiment of the invention whereby the film cartridge comprises body of the camera including the camera shutter mechanism and a top section which comprises the control means and also the viewing and flash means.

25 Figure 18 show a different embodiment of the film cartridge of the present invention where no door is provided to light seal the dark room of the bridging portion.

Figure 19 is a cross sectioned view of an alternative cartridge design, viewed in the direction of arrows 19 in Figure 20.

Figure 20 is a front view of the alternative cartridge design.

Figure 21 is a bottom view of the alternate cartridge.

5 Figure 22 is a rear view of the camera with the backing plate removed.

Figure 23 is a rear view of an alternate for the arrangement for the camera body.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

10 Figure 1 illustrates a camera body 1 and a film cartridge 2, which in this view is inserted into the camera body from below. On the front of the camera body there is a view finder 4, a camera flash 3 and a light control means, typically a camera lens 5. Spring loaded arms 32 bear against the back of the film cartridge to locate the cartridge in position. A camera with flash function and auto winding
15 function will also include electric circuits for the flash light and the motor, a battery slot and a gear system.

Figure 2 shows the fully assembled camera comprising the camera body 1 and the film cartridge 2 which has been inserted from below and locked into position.

20 Figures 3 and 6(a) show the disassembled film cartridge 2 with the back plate removed and the film removed. The film cartridge internals comprise a region 7 for exposed film and advancing sprockets 8 and 9 at the top and bottom respectively of the film cartridge to positively engage the film at its periphery. A film supporting structure 11 runs around the periphery of the dark room 10, which
25 together with the backing plate 15 and a film cartridge door 13 provides a light proof chamber for the film inside the cartridge. A spool 12 contained within the body of the

film cartridge 2 allows the winding on of a section of film into the dark room and subsequent exposure for an image to be captured.

Figure 4 shows the film 29 that has been loaded into the film cartridge 2. The film, from the unexposed film spooling region 12, is passed through the dark room, is engaged with the advance sprockets 8 and 9 and is collected by the film collection spool 6. The film in the film cartridge is for example a standard 35 mm film scroll that is loaded in to the film cartridge by the factory. In this way the user does not have to consider handling, exposure and contamination issues of the film. The rolling structure of the camera body is attached to the sprockets 8 and 9 of the film cartridge and it rolls the film back to the used film spool region which for example includes the film canister. The canister is for example a standard container for 35 mm films and therefore allows the film to be processed normally by any camera shop after the film is removed from the film cartridge. The advancement of the film may however be the other way around where it is dispensed from the canister as opposed to collected therein.

The region of the cartridge where the film extends across the dark room requires control of the light such that when the cartridge is not engaged with the camera body, any film extending across the dark room is not undesirably exposed. However, at the same time, the dark room does require light to be accessible into the dark room when the cartridge is engaged with the camera body for taking a photograph. The dark room 10 has a light opening or film cartridge aperture 22 which allows for such light as controlled by the shutter of the camera body, to expose that portion of the film in the dark room. The film cartridge aperture however is preferably closed when the cartridge is not engaged with the camera body. This closure is preferably achieved by a film cartridge door 13. Figure 5 shows the film cartridge door 13 which comprises two portions, the first portion 13a being light impermeable and the second portion 13b being an opening through which

light may permeate. The film cartridge door 13 is in a condition to prevent light from entering the dark room through the film cartridge aperture 22 at least during times when the cartridge is not fully engaged with the camera body.

Figure 5 shows one embodiment of the film cartridge 2 wherein safety releases 33 prevent the movement of the film cartridge door 13 unless it is correctly engaged with the camera body. In this particular embodiment the insertion of the film cartridge 2 into the film body 1 activates the safety releases to allow the film cartridge door to be opened as illustrated in Figure 7. The location of the film cartridge by insertion also then opens the film cartridge door 13, thereby placing the film cartridge in a state ready for exposure by the camera body shutter mechanism to expose the film on demand by the user the film and thus create an exposure on the film of the image captured.

Figure 6 shows the fully assembled film cartridge 2 with the backing plate 15 attached whereby the film inside is safely guarded against any light penetrating and thus pre-exposing the film. The film cartridge is therefore ready for use by insertion into, or association with, the camera.

To direct the cartridge into a precise location in the camera body, the cartridge has an index groove 68 seen in Fig. 6(a). As seen in Fig. 10(a), the camera body interior wall has an elongate protrusion 70 shaped to be received in the groove 68 only when the cartridge is properly aligned in the camera body, and the cooperating groove 68 and protrusion 70 are in continuous engagement to properly position the cartridge when installed. A camera operating component power supply, here electric battery 72, may also be in the cartridge and, through appropriate contacts in the cartridge and camera, powers the camera systems.

In Figure 7 the safety releases 33 are activated when the film cartridge 2 is inserted into the camera casing 1 by the front inside panel of the camera casing. Once these safety releases have been activated, the film cartridge door 13 is then free

to slide out of the way when the cartridge is safely within the camera body, by the film cartridge door moving means 16 shown in Figure 8. In this way the film cartridge (and thus the film) can safely be removed and inserted at will by the user with there being no risk of undesired exposure of the film.

5 Figure 9 shows the association of the controls within the camera casing 1 in Figure 9(b) to those mounted on top of the film cartridge 2 in Figure 9(a). The film wind on control 17 of the camera body engages to a receiving means 18 on the film cartridge. In this way, wind on of the film effected by the user on the camera body will be transmitted to the actual film in the film cartridge. The top film advance sprocket has receiving means 19 associated with it to engage with an interlock control 20 in the camera body. The interlock control prevents the double exposure of the film. The arrangement may work whereby the means to activate the camera shutter mechanism and thus take a photograph is only enabled when the film has been wound on. In a situation where the film has not been wound on from a previous photograph having been taken, then the camera shutter mechanism activation means will not be enabled. The film counter 14 can be seen in figure 5, which records the number of photographs either taken or remaining on the roll of film. The film counter 14 as shown in Figure 10 is visible through an aperture 21 in the base of the film cartridge 2, and is shown in Figure 10. By direct association with the bottom winding sprocket 8 the number of exposures taken, and or remaining on the film roll can be known.

 Figure 11 (a) (b) and (c) show a series of movements of the film cartridge door 13 by translation to progressively open the film cartridge aperture 22. Fig. 11(d) shows the elements separated and Fig. 11(e) shows a top assembled view thereof. Note in Fig. 11(e) the power supplying batteries for the camera elements held in the camera body. The film cartridge 2 is shown in Figure 11(a) partially inserted into the camera body 1. The L-shaped safety lock element 3 engages the

cartridge door 13 holding it closed. Figure 11(b) shows the film cartridge 2 inserted into the camera body 1 just prior to engagement of the film cartridge door 13 with means (not shown) to open the film cartridge aperture 22. Final insertion of the film cartridge 2 into the camera body 1 releases the safety lock 3, either by swinging the lock elements outward of the receiving slots in the door 13 or perhaps by breaking off the locking tab ends of the lock elements 3. The insertion moves the film cartridge door 13 completely and opens the film cartridge aperture 22 thus allowing a photograph to be taken upon pressing of the shutter activation button 23. The film cartridge door is normally held closed when the film cartridge is out of the camera cartridge by springs 24 (a) and (b) which attach to the film cartridge at their upper point and to the film cartridge door at their lower point.

Figure 6(a) is an exploded view showing the various components of the cartridge, including the preferred embodiment of the safety lock. The safety lock, shown in Figs. 8(d), 8(e) and 8(f) is an integral pivotal unit including a shaft 42 that is received in a pivot opening in the body of the cartridge adjacent to door 13. A latch arm 44 is normally pivoted as shown in Fig. 8(a) into a notch 46 at one side wall of the door 22. This latching holds the door 13 over the film cartridge aperture (not shown in Fig. 8(a)), blocking entrance of light into the film cartridge. The top edge 63 of the door 13 abuts an abutment 64 that positions the door. A hook 48 supports the upper end 52 of the drive spring 24. The lower end of the spring 24 is attached on the spring tab 54 at the bottom of the door 13. A latch release lever 56 protrudes through an opening 58 in the side of the bridging portion and dark room 60 of the cartridge. Upon insertion of the cartridge into the camera from below, the latch arm 44 remains in the notch 46 until the cartridge is inserted sufficiently that the latch release lever 56 protruding from the side of the dark room portion of the cartridge contacts the safety release 33 in the form of an upstanding abutment projecting toward the lever 56 and the abutment 33 being of height sufficient that it

remains in contact with the lever 56 pushing it inwardly of the opening 58 as the cartridge is fully installed in the camera body, which as shown in Fig. 8(b), unlocks the still closed door. Once the door is unlatched, then as shown in Fig. 8(c), the compressed springs 24 expand to drive the door 13 downward and open the film cartridge aperture 22 to passage of light. The film cartridge aperture no longer seals the outside light by the aperture sealing panel 64 of the door 13.

As the cartridge is removed from the camera body, the door 13 must be restored to its closed condition blocking the film cartridge aperture. To raise the door 13 against the bias of the compression spring 24, an abutment protrudes inward from the camera body to engage and push the door upwardly until the latch 44 again settles into notch 46, at which a abutment need no longer support the door and the cartridge body can be forced past the abutment and removed with the door 13 closed and relocked by the latch on 44 to the condition shown in Fig. 8(a).

Figures 12(a) and (b) show an alternative means to that of Figure 11 for opening the film cartridge door upon insertion of the film cartridge 2 into the camera body 1. Figure 12(a) shows the film cartridge 2 partially inserted into the camera body 1. The film cartridge door 13 is rotatably supported by a pivot 25 and held in place by a spring means 26. A film cartridge door opening means 27 is located within the camera body. Upon final insertion of the film cartridge 2 into the body of the camera 1 as depicted in Figure 12(b), the opening means 27 bears upon the film cartridge door 13 and rotates it, in this case, by for example 90 degrees, to open the film cartridge aperture 22. In this way correct operation of the camera shutter by the shutter activation button 23 will take a photograph of the viewed image.

Figure 13(a) shows a film cartridge 2 fully inserted into the camera 1 and a film cartridge door 13 covering the film cartridge aperture 22. Figure 13(b) shows the aperture 22 uncovered by rotation of the film cartridge door 13 to the left.

Here the film cartridge door doubles as the camera shutter mechanism and also as the film cartridge door. The taking of a photograph by activation of the shutter button 23 activates the film cartridge door to rotate to one side and thus expose the film (which is also the camera shutter) to the image.

5 Figures 14(a) and (b) show an alternative means for film exposure. A cartridge door mechanism 30 in figure 14(a) is closed. Activation of the door is achieved by a button accessible from the exterior of the camera and the door folds into the dark room 10. Once the door is open the camera can be used at will to take photographs by the provision of the aperture, lens and shutter of the camera body.

10 One embodiment of the camera 1 and the film cartridge 2 is shown in Figure 15, whereby the film cartridge 2 is brought into the camera from beneath and locked into position. Figure 16 shows an alternative embodiment whereby the film cartridge 2 is inserted into the camera 1 from the rear face of the camera 1 and locked into position. Figure 17 shows a further alternative embodiment whereby the film
15 cartridge 2 contains not only the film and the exposure means but also the lens and is itself a component of the camera which the user will hold onto. This combination film-cartridge-camera body is then attached to control body 31 which includes the shutter activation button 23, the viewing means 4, and the flashlight means 3 which may be electrically powered by a battery in the cartridge. In this way the camera
20 body is reduced to the bare minimum needed to activate, control and aim the camera and the film cartridge attaches to it and is the disposable or reattachable component.

 It is also envisaged that the cartridge of the present invention, for example shown in Figures 3-6, may come in a form where there is no door provided and where the aperture 22 for the dark room 10 is not light sealable independent from
25 being engaged with the camera body. This embodiment is for example shown in Figure 18. The cartridge in this form may for example be substantially provided as shown in Figures 3-6 save for the provision of the door 13. The cartridge in a

pre-used condition for example provides the film in a preloaded condition where the film is collected by a canister 6 provided at the second spool region and a substantial portion of the film is spooled in the unexposed film spooling region 12. That portion of the film extending between the two spooling regions and through the dark room will in such situations be exposed to light entering through the aperture 22. In such a pre-used condition the first frame of the film will be exposed. However, once the cartridge is inserted into the camera body, the subsequent winding on of the film onto the canister 6 will present the subsequent frames for appropriate exposure in capturing the image projected through the lens aperture and shutter of the camera body. The images that are then captured and wound onto the canister will then be retained in the canister in a light sealed environment. In order to ensure that the unexposed film in the unexposed film spooling region also remains unexposed at times where the cartridge is external of the camera body, this unexposed film spooling region is also light sealed. Such light sealing is preferably achieved by ensuring that the film extending from the unexposed film spooling region extends through a very narrow slot (as for example similar to the slot provided in the film canister) thereby preventing light from entering into the unexposed film spooling region. Such configuration is desirable whether or not the cartridge is provided with or without the door. Should the cartridge be removed from the camera midway during use, that frame presented in the dark room will become exposed to light. However, upon reinsertion of the cartridge into the camera body or another camera body, it merely requires the winding on of the film to advance the film to present an unexposed frame in the dark room for the subsequent exposure for capturing the next image. At the end of use of the cartridge, the film will have been wound on fully into the canister which can then be removed from the casing of the cartridge for processing by standard processing equipment.

Figs. 19, 20 and 21 illustrate an alternative embodiment of a film cartridge 80 comprised of two main parts, the exposed film spooler region 82 where the exposed film is collected and the rest 84 of the cartridge 84. The unexposed film is retained in a first spool region 86 of the rest of the cartridge 84. That portion 84 also includes the door 13 aperture 22 and the front 88 and rear plate 92 of the cartridge. The cartridge parts 82 and 84 are manufactured separately and after the film is loaded, they may be joined. The film 94 is drawn out of the region 86 toward the spool 96 which may be a film cannister or a wind-up reel.

After the initial portion of the film is wound on the spool 96, the cartridge parts 82 and 84 are adjoined. Illustrated are upper and lower sets of cooperating projections 102 on part 84 and cooperating locking groove 104 on part 82. To separably latch the cartridge parts, at the front of the cartridge there are two hooks 106 on part 84 which snap into receiving grooves or openings 108 on the cartridge part 82. With the projection 102 and the latch 104 and the latch 106 snapped into the groove 108, the cartridge is integrated. Upon completion of photography and whether it is desired to remove the wound film from the camera, the portions of the cartridge may again be separated for example by applying force to the release button 110 on the latch 106 for separating the latch 106 from the groove 108, and thereafter separating the projection 102 from the notch 104. A film cannister can be removed from the spooling region 96.

This cartridge also permits reloading, since new film may be loaded with a spooler in the portion 84. This arrangement has the benefit of enabling reloading of the cartridge with new film without having to thereafter form the cartridge around the installed film and more important, enables removal of film from the cartridge simply and without destroying the cartridge, which enables the cartridge to be reused.

This arrangement is also particularly useful for a loading technique where the supply of unexposed film is provided in a conventional film cannister, which can be put into the spooling region 96. Then the film to be used for the photography is led out of the spooling region 96 and wound into the spooling region 86, and before photograph begins. During photography, the film would be refed back to the cannister at region 96 so that by completion of photography, exposed film would be back in the cannister at region 96, which cannister had supplied the initial unexposed film.

The film cartridge can easily be ejected from the camera body when a switch is pushed releasing the film cartridge from the camera body. The camera body can in this way be used many times, and the film cartridge may also be recycled with new film loaded into it. Further, the removable/replaceable feature as indicated above enables the change of different types of film to suit different uses (e.g. different ASA) or the grouping of photos of a particular nature in a particular roll of film/film set (e.g. different occasions, different groups of people, different subject matters etc). Interchangeability of camera bodies for one film cartridge can also be achieved with the present invention. A camera body which provides particular features such as a wide angled lens, a colored lens or other effect type lens may be provided, where the film cartridge of the present invention is interchangeable between such bodies.

Fig. 22 shows a rear view of the camera body including the means that engages an installed film cartridge. There is a film open switch 120 which when operated permits removal of the film cartridge. That film open switch is in turn connected with a release lever 122 which translates left and right and in the illustrated condition to the left frees the detent tabs 124 to press against the backing plate of the film cartridge and can be retained there. The film cartridge back side has recesses therein adapted to receive those tabs 124 which locks the film cartridge in position.

Movement of the lever 120 downward moves the lever 122 to the right on its support tabs 126 fixed on the back of the cartridge until the lever 122 raises the tabs 124 which releases the bias of the tabs 124 against the cartridge, freeing the cartridge to be released. A spring 128 attached to the lever and to the camera body urges the lever to the left and returns it to the left when the switch lever 120 is raised. The detent tabs 124 are then again in position to be received in the recesses 125 in the back of the film cartridge.

Fig. 23 is a rear view of an alternate view of the back of a camera with some elements exposed. It shows a different shape for the switch lever 132 to release the tabs 134 as in the previous embodiment.

Although the present invention has been described in relation to particular embodiments thereof, many other variations and modifications and other uses will become apparent to those skilled in the art. It is preferred, therefore, that the present invention be limited not by the specific disclosure herein, but only by the appended claims.